50-year-old musical never loses its relevance

By Emily Stephenson
The Daily Reflector

"Don't get hot/Cause man, you got/Some high times ahead," sings one of the characters in Jerome Robbins' modernization of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."

East Carolina University will "play it cool" Tuesday to June 30, when ECU/Loessin Summer Theatre presents "West Side Story."

The tragic love story, set in 1950s New York City, debuted on Broadway in 1957 and took to the big screen in a 1961 movie starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer.

Battling gangs take the place of feuding families, and guns and knives replace swords, but "West Side Story" deviates from "Romeo and Juliet" in another conspicuous manner: the tragedy is a musical.

With music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, "West Side Story" transforms street rumbles into dance numbers and arguments into spirited songs.

While this makes "West Side Story" an audience favorite, it also poses unique challenges for performers, said Jill Matarelli Carlson, the production's fight choreographer.

The musical requires each of the more than 40 cast members to sing, dance and act.

"It is the 'triple threat,'" Carlson said.

In fact, "West Side Story" is said to be the first Broadway production to demand this high standard from every actor.

"It set up what modern shows are like," said Jeff Woodruff, managing director.

The emphasis on dancing means Carlson and Tommi Galaska, the dance choreographer, have been instrumental in preparing the summer theatre production, which stars Kelly Schmidt and David Ruffin as luckless lovers.

Dancing and fighting

CONT...
If you Go!

What: ECU/Loesin Summer Theatre presents "West Side Story"
When: Tuesday-June 29 at 8 p.m. and June 30 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Where: McGinnis Theatre
Cost: $30 for adults, $25 for youth
Call: 328-6390 or (800) ECU-ARTS
Online: www.ecuarts.com

are so intertwined in "West Side Story" that Carlson and Galaska have clocked in hours together choreographing the show, beginning about a month ago.

"The dance and the fighting come together," Galaska said. "That was kind of a special thing in this show."

Neither Galaska nor Carlson watched the movie before beginning to choreograph, focusing instead on the music, other films from the period and director John Shearin's vision for the production.

"You can get the feel for a lot of the dancing from the music," Carlson said. "The attitude is a little more jazz than rock 'n' roll."

The music also helped determine the action in the fight scenes.

"Typically, when I choreograph a fight, there is no background music," Carlson said, adding that different sounds and intensities in the score indicate when something dramatic must happen.

Carlson said fights must do three things: tell the story of the scene, appear realistic to the audience and remain safe.

Several precautions are taken to ensure that fight scenes are realistic but safe. All hits are directed toward areas of large muscle mass, and contact is never made with the face.

"It's selling the illusion that someone's been punched," Carlson said. "It's really the acting that makes it look violent."

Galaska said the frequent fighting in the play sets the tone for much of the dancing.

"It's a lot of testosterone," she joked.

Galaska, Carlson and Woodruff agreed that the stories of "Romeo and Juliet" and "West Side Story" are remarkably relevant in modern culture.

"The Crips and the Bloods," Woodruff said, noting rival Los Angeles gangs as a modern turf war like those in the plays. "It's the same story."

That story even has been updated to reflect conflicts in the Middle East. In the 2006 Academy Award winner for Best Live Action Short Film, "West Bank Story," an Israeli soldier falls in love with a Palestinian woman.

"Shakespeare plays are still around because they still speak to people," Carlson said.

Emily Stephenson can be contacted at estephenson@coxnc.com.
Gene therapy offers hope for Parkinson’s

By Malcolm Ritter
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — An experimental treatment for Parkinson’s disease seemed to improve symptoms — dramatically so, for one 59-year-old man — without causing side effects in an early study of a dozen patients.

The gene therapy treatment involved slipping billions of copies of a gene into the brain to calm overactive brain circuitry.

The small study focused on testing the safety of the procedure rather than its effectiveness, and experts cautioned it’s too soon to draw conclusions about how well it works. But they called the results promising and said the approach merits further studies.

“We still have quite a bit more testing to do,” said Dr. Michael Kaplitt of Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, an author of the study. Still, “the initial results are extremely encouraging.”

Kaplitt and collaborators report their results in this week’s issue of the British medical journal, The Lancet.

They’re not alone in trying gene therapy for Parkinson’s. In April, another team told a medical meeting that its experiments, which delivered a different kind of gene to a different part of the brain, also appeared safe and gave a preliminary hint of benefit.

More than half a million Americans have Parkinson’s. They endure symptoms that include tremors, rigidity in their limbs, slowness of movement and impaired balance and coordination. Eventually they can become severely disabled.

Nathan Klein, a 59-year-old freelance television producer in Port Washington, N.Y., said the disease left him “pretty messed up.” It weakened his voice, impaired his walking and made his hand tremble so badly he couldn’t hold a glass of wine without spilling it all.

Klein was the first patient to be treated with Kaplitt’s gene therapy procedure in 2003, and he said his symptoms gradually subsided afterward. Nowadays, he said, apart from freezing now and then when he wants to walk, the symptoms are basically gone.

“I’m elated,” said Klein, who continues to take his regular pills for the disease. “It’s un-
New step in Parkinson's treatment

Preliminary evidence suggests that an experimental gene therapy procedure could ease Parkinson's symptoms with no side effects.

**Treatment procedure**

A tube — about the width of a hair — is threaded through the brain to one of two subthalamic nuclei where an engineered virus is injected.

The virus enters a brain cell and delivers a gene that prompts the cell to create a substance called glutamic acid decarboxylase — or GAD.

GAD promotes the creation of a chemical called GABA, an inhibitor that quiets excessive neural activity associated with Parkinson's.

**SOURCE:** New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Cornell Medical Center

believable.”

Kaplitt, who has a financial interest in Neurologix Inc., which paid for the research, noted that the 12 patients in the study still have Parkinson's symptoms. The amount of medication they were already taking for their symptoms didn't change significantly in the year following their surgery.

Current medicines can control symptoms, but can't stop the disease from getting worse over time, and they can produce troublesome side effects like uncontrollable movement.

Some patients gain relief from a surgical treatment called deep brain stimulation, a procedure in which electrodes are placed in the brain and connected to a programmable stimulator.

Kaplitt's procedure was aimed at achieving the same goal as that surgery, calming overactive circuitry in the brain. It gets overactive because it loses the normal supply of a chemical called GABA.
Online at the farm

Regarding your June 13 editorial "UNC knits a web":
Lifelong learning has become important because scientific and technological advances have made it necessary. Many people with jobs, families and an assortment of other responsibilities that adults must attend to take online classes because they offer the best opportunity for getting a degree.

I have taught online for several years and, last year, at age 68, I completed a master's degree in instructional technology from East Carolina University — taking all of my courses online. I live on a farm in a rural area, far from a college campus offering this degree.

Your editorial well covered the important points about online learning. I hope North Carolina residents will read your information and will sign up for classes. In my case, I decided that next year will come any way — why shouldn't I have a degree to show for those 12 months? The added plus was that I never had to leave the farm!

Mary Jo Loftin
Mount Olive
Budget deal unlikely despite new revenues

The state budget stalemate has hardened to the point that news of a possible $256 million in additional revenues might not lead to a new $20 billion spending plan by July 1, the start of the fiscal year.

The legislature’s fiscal analysts say tax collections continue to come in better than first projected. They now say the budget surplus could grow to nearly $1.4 million.

But the new estimate did not have House leaders rushing to drop two temporary tax increases that would provide roughly $300 million in next year’s budget. House Majority Leader Hugh Holliman, a Lexington Democrat, noted that less than half of the $256 million is recurring money, which means there would only be about $120 million available the following year.

Holliman said House leaders are also concerned about the state’s finances if they opt to take over the counties’ 5 percent share of the Medicaid bill. Some rural counties are hit particularly hard by the Medicaid bill because they have a high percentage of residents on the government health plan.

House and Senate leaders are trying to come up with a Medicaid plan that involves swapping revenues with the counties. They say that needs to be resolved before the budget can move. But there were no breakthroughs Thursday.

Holliman said it’s unlikely lawmakers can agree on the Medicaid relief and pass a budget with little more than a week to go. He said the House is drawing up a stopgap spending plan to keep government running past June 30.
5,000 to park at UNC campus

*Carolina North director says they won’t all be employees*

**BY JESSE JAMES DECONTO**

**STAFF WRITER**

CHAPEL HILL - Carolina North Executive Director Jack Evans can't say how many employees will work at UNC-Chapel Hill's proposed satellite campus.

But former Chapel Hill Town Council member Joe Capowski has been doing some math. Based on the university's plans to build 2 million square feet of office, classroom and laboratory space at Carolina North over the next 15 years, Capowski figures the campus will employ about 5,000 people come 2025.

And it so happens that UNC-CH planners anticipate 5,000 parking spaces on the campus for the first phase, a number they revealed for the first time Thursday.

"You're suggesting one parking space per employee," Capowski said.

"I'm not arguing with your arithmetic," Evans said.

"Which means that the whole transit plan will fail," Capowski said.

"Well, I don't agree with your conclusion," Evans said.

Evans said the 5,000 parking spots would not be just for employees, but also for patients who might come there for health care and other visitors who might come to eat at a restaurant.

"Three or four thousand cars will be leaving every day at the end of the afternoon," Carrboro resident Philip Duchastel said.

The first phase of Carolina North, totaling 2.5 million square feet on 65 to 100 acres, could include academic and research buildings such as a relocated School of Law and School of Public Health. It also might include a private sector Innovation Center and workspace for corporate partners applying university research.

In addition to the academic space, planners predict 500,000 square feet of housing, 200,000 square feet of medical clinics and 100,000 square feet of retail goods and services.

"There are going to be a lot of people coming to that site that are not employees," Evans said. "Joe oversimplified it for the purpose of making his point."

The point is one that community leaders have been making for years: Carolina North will put a lot of cars on Orange County roads, especially Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive.

The university's latest plan, which administrators will present to the Board of Trustees next month, concentrates the campus on the current Horace Williams Airport near the intersection of those two roads.

State legislators are reviewing a proposal to move UNC-CH's Medical Air Operations, which flies specialists-doctors to patients around the state, to Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The university opposes developing Carolina North around the airport but would support a community effort to find another airport location nearer to UNC Hospitals.

How people will get to and from Carolina North is still under study, but the university has committed to transit-oriented development, which means the campus is supposed to rely less on people driving there and more on them riding the bus or some other form of public transit.

Many observers would like the university to use the rail line that already sweeps along the western edge of the proposed campus on its way from Durham, through Carrboro to the UNC-CH co-generation plant on Cameron Avenue. But Evans said any rail station at Carolina North is far in the future.

"Carolina North is going to develop from MLK westward and is not going to come close to that rail line," he said.

Over the next 50 years, the university expects to build 10,500 to 11,500 parking spaces on the campus. A previous UNC-CH plan proposed 17,000 parking spots for the 50-year build-out. The Village Project, a local organization promoting sustainable development, has recommended 6,000.

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Staff writer Jesse James DeConto can be reached at 932-6760 or jesse.deconto@newsobserver.com.
BLACKSBURG, Va. "We've been hurt," the voice whispered, terrified, into a cellphone.

On the other end of the line, Virginia Tech Police Lt. Debbi Morgan could hear gunfire. It was so loud that it sounded as if someone was shooting right into the receiver.

"Where are you?" Morgan asked, doing her best to stay calm.

"Two-Eleven Norris Hall," the voice said so softly that it was obvious to Morgan that the person did not want to be heard.

There's a shooting! 211 Norris Hall! Morgan shouted to two dispatchers. Happening now.

"Are you still there?" Morgan asked.

Silence.

Gasping for breath.

Pop. Pop.

"I can't talk," the voice said.

"Keep yourself safe," Morgan said. "We're sending people."

"Please hurry," the voice whispered.

* * *

Nineteen-year-old Emily Haas's call to Morgan helped unleash Virginia's largest police and emergency response since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the Pentagon. The 911 call came at 9:43 a.m. April 16, just as Seung Hui Cho's Norris Hall rampage began, and Haas and Morgan stayed on the phone until Virginia Tech and Blacksburg police officers rushed into Haas's classroom and found Cho dead. Interviews with Morgan, Haas and more than three dozen police officers, emergency responders and federal agents provide for the first time an inside look at the enormous rescue and investigative effort that followed the shootings.

They also reveal details about what happened inside Norris as Cho killed 30 people, then himself. Even before he chained the doors at Norris and began his rampage, Cho had reconnoitered the Gothic-style building. The morning of the shootings, he poked his head into several classrooms before the attack. With methodical precision, he moved from room to room along a second-floor hallway and shot anyone who moved with his two handguns. When he was done in each room, he closed the door behind him. Then he went back to rooms where he'd already been, found students who were still alive and executed them at point-blank range. Of the 30 people who died at Norris, 28 of
them were shot in the head. Cho shot some four or five times.

Within eight minutes of Haas’s call, Blacksburg and Virginia Tech police broke into Norris Hall. They worked frantically to save students clinging to life. Medics performed triage and rushed victims to safety as SWAT teams moved through the building to confirm that Cho had acted alone. In the critical first 20 minutes, when ambulances could not pull close to Norris Hall because they hadn’t been given the all-clear by SWAT teams, one officer placed wounded students in his sport-utility vehicle and ferried them over sidewalks and lawns to get to the ambulances, parked blocks away.

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Emily Haas, a French major from Richmond, was lying against a wall, partially behind a desk, in the back of her classroom. With her blue eyes squeezed shut, she held a cellphone to her ear with her right hand. Around her middle finger was the silver "angel band" of her Pi Beta Phi sorority. She was wearing jeans, an old yellow T-shirt of her mother's and a new pair of brown Sperry Top-Siders; a baseball cap covered her blond hair. The smell of burnt gunpowder swirled around her as a silent Cho fired his handguns.

"Try to stay calm," Morgan, 42, a mother with three young children, told Haas. "Ease your breathing."

Two minutes into the call, Morgan asked Haas whether she still heard the gunshots. Yes, Haas said, but they were farther away. The gunman had spent 120 frightening seconds in her classroom, then gone next door.

"Stay under the desk," Morgan said. "Keep talking to me. We're hurrying. They'll be there in a minute."

"Thank you."

Silence.

"Are you there?" Morgan asked.

"Yeah, I'm here," the voice whispered. "We need an ambulance." Students were bleeding all around her. She heard moaning. Haas opened her eyes slightly, saw a shell casing and closed them. Was the door locked? Morgan asked. It doesn't lock, Haas replied.

Then, as if out of nowhere, the gunshots became loud again. Pcp. Pop. Pop. Pop.

"He's in here," the voice whispered. It was 9:48. Cho had returned to Room 211. He was shooting quickly, walking down aisles cluttered with book bags and bodies. He went to many students who were breathing, aimed at their head and fired. Bullets ricocheted off walls. Haas tried to play dead.

Pop. Pop.

Morgan heard Haas scream. A blood-curdling, hysterical scream.

"I just got hit," she said.

A bullet had struck the back of Haas's head.

Sharp pain.
As Morgan tried to keep Haas calm, Virginia Tech and Blacksburg police officers were desperately trying to get into Norris Hall two floors below. Since the Columbine shootings, police across the country have trained to respond to an "active shooter" by entering a building immediately.

Blacksburg Police Sgt. Anthony Wilson ran with four officers to the front double door. But the door was chained from the inside. They heard glass breaking, people screaming and shots being fired. They ran to the northwest corner of Norris and met up with other officers, some in SWAT gear. They tried the door there; it was also chained. "Shoot the chain," they yelled almost in unison. One aimed a shotgun and tried, but no luck. He shot again. It wouldn't budge.

On the phone, Morgan heard another loud gunshot. And another. She heard the girl's breathing quicken. "He's reloading," Haas said.

"Okay, there's units there. Stay calm. Try to stay calm. Ease your breathing."

Haas's breathing slowed.

"What's your name?"

"I can't talk."


Lt. Curtis Cook, leader of the Virginia Tech SWAT team, heard the shots and looked up at the gray limestone building to see if he could spot the gunman. The officers moved to a big wooden door next to the chained one. It was locked with a deadbolt. An officer shot through the lock and pushed the door open, then the group ran inside through a mechanical shop. It was quiet.

They split up. Some, including Wilson, the Blacksburg SWAT team leader, started up a staircase. Cook and his group moved down the first-floor hall, checking classrooms in an "emergency clearing" tactic, and headed up another staircase, at the other end of the hall, so they would have both sides of the second floor covered.

At 9:51, as Cook and Wilson moved up opposite stairwells, they heard a gunshot.

Where was the gunman? they wondered. Was he with hostages? Which classroom? Which floor? How many gunmen were there?

* * *

The 9:51 shot echoed inside Haas's classroom. It was so loud that it seemed as if it were right next to her. Through Morgan's 15 years as an officer, she had dealt with difficult situations. But nothing like this.

"Stay calm," Morgan said.

Neither of them knew it, but Cho had just put a 9mm Glock to his head and pulled the trigger. Haas's eyes were still closed, her head wounds were starting to throb. Am I going to die? I must not be dead yet if I can feel this. Was the gunman still in the room? She didn't want to touch her head. She didn't want to feel the bullet. She didn't want him to see her move.
She heard Morgan in her ear: "The officers are inside, so just stay calm. Stay with me. Stay calm."

Sirens wailed and radios blared. The officers, some in black helmets and carrying high-powered rifles, moved down the second-floor hallway. Several frightened students ran out of a classroom. Two officers helped them out of the building by walking them to the south entrance on the first floor. It was chained. One shot the chain, and the first students poured out of Norris at 9:56.

On the second floor, a team of officers moved from room to room, searching for the gunman and trying to find wounded students. Because of all that firepower and adrenaline, Cook became worried about friendly fire with Wilson's group. So he ordered some members of his team to cover the stairwell and the others to pull back and clear the third floor's rooms. They met up with the second team and together made their way down the second floor. Cook and four officers tried to open the door to Room 211. But they couldn't. Something was blocking it. They yelled: "Police! Open the door!"

The police are at your door, Morgan told Haas. Can you get up and open the door?

When she opened her eyes and stood up, she found herself in the middle of what looked like a combat zone. Around her, 11 of her classmates and her teacher were dead. Five others were badly wounded. She didn't know whether the shooting had lasted five minutes or an hour. Cho, his face covered with blood, was lying in front of the classroom near the door. But she didn't look. She moved forward, dazed.

Blocking the door were two bodies with ghastly head wounds: One belonged to her beloved teacher Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, who would greet students with "Bonjour!" and sing French songs during class, and the other was a classmate's. Holding the cellphone in one hand, she tried to pull the door. It cracked a little. Then shut. She felt weak and dizzy. An officer radioed to Morgan, who was still on the phone. Tell her to step back, he told Morgan, and he pushed hard. Haas was face to face with SWAT officers pointing guns. "Hands up! Show us your hands!" one said. They couldn't take any chances. Haas wearily tried to raise her hands.

Her hair was disheveled and filled with bullet fragments. Blood dripped down the right side of her face. A Virginia Tech sergeant pulled her out and walked her down the hall. You're going to be okay, he said.

On the first floor, Haas saw Wendell Flinchum, who had been Virginia Tech's police chief for only four months. Flinchum and Blacksburg Police Chief Kimberley Crannis had run into the building from the other side. They couldn't shoot the chain because faculty were at the door, desperate to get out. One officer tried to rip the door off its hinges as Jason Dominiczak, 22, a senior and volunteer medic, ran for bolt cutters from an emergency rescue truck. They opened the door a few inches, cut the chain, let the staff out and flooded the building. Early that morning, Crannis and Flinchum had called in SWAT teams in case they needed to serve warrants in the 7:15 a.m. shooting of two students in a dormitory across campus. Those SWAT officers were able to get to Norris Hall first, just three minutes after the first 911 call.

Flinchum, who once attended classes at Virginia Tech, put his arm around Haas and helped her out of Norris. "You're safe now," he said.

* * *

Police opened every door and knocked down locked ones. As officers passed students who were able to walk out, they asked: "One shooter? Two shooters? What does he look like? What's he wearing? Where is he?" One gunman, they replied. Black T-shirt. Asian.

At 10:08, officers got their answers: An Asian male with a massive head injury was on the floor of Haas's classroom
He was wearing a black shirt, cargo pants and an orange-and-maroon Virginia Tech baseball cap. Two guns were at his side, one loaded. Despite his wounds, they could not be sure he was dead and took no chances. They handcuffed him. "Shooter down," a sergeant yelled.

But almost at once, the officers remembered, they wondered whether there were more shooters. One person couldn't have done all this. As they continued to open each classroom door, the officers were met with unspeakable horror. Lifeless students in jeans and tennis shoes sprawled on the floor and under overturned desks. Blood everywhere. On the walls, the desks, the floors.

One student's head rested on the wooden laminate top of her desk. It looked as if she were taking a nap except for the pool of blood underneath. Some bodies lay on others. One student was shot and fell on another. He was shot again, and a bullet went through him and into his classmate. There were head wounds, leg wounds, bodies riddled with bullets amid the clutter of books, notebooks, cups, school papers, wallets, calculators.

Through it all, Craniss was struck by the utter silence. "You would never have known that there was anybody in the classrooms," she recalled.

Craniss didn't know whether some students were alive until she touched them. The ones who responded only whispered. Some were too wounded to talk; the others had survived by playing dead and were too scared to stop. The first student who asked for help was under a body.

Officers opened the door of Room 207 and saw a wounded student with his hands on top of his leg resting on a desk. Show us your hands, they yelled. The senior held up his hands, and blood spurted all over. He had been shot twice in his leg, one bullet piercing his femoral artery. Virginia Tech officer Jaret Reece quickly cut an electrical cord from a projector, ran to the student and began fashioning a tourniquet.

Dominiczak and medic Brad Privett leapfrogged from room to room, applying bandages, inserting IVs and providing other first aid. Officers tried to calm students. The scene was like a battlefield: They made rapid decisions about each one's condition, yelling colors that told the officers what to do: Red meant life-threatening injuries. Yellow was the next level -- unable to walk. Green was the walking wounded. Black meant the student was dead.

The student with the tourniquet was red. Even though Haas had been struck in the back of the head, she was green.

* * *

Ambulances were still blocks away. Not every room and hallway had been thoroughly searched. Blacksburg Capt. Bruce Bradbery, a 25-year police veteran and a deacon in his church, made a split-second decision. The badly wounded students could not wait.

With the help of Flinchum and Blacksburg Police Capt. Donald Goodman, Bradbery scooped the students up one by one and loaded them into his gold Explorer. Goodman shielded one, fearful a shooter could be inside and might fire. Bradbery put those with the worst wounds in the front seat so he could steady them with one arm and told the ones he put in the back to hold on tightly. With lights and sirens on, he drove over sidewalk curbs and lawns to reach the ambulances. Bradbery drove back and forth through the blustery wind and snowflakes to get and deliver more students, including Haas. As she sat in the back, she worried she was getting blood in his nice car.

One girl told Bradbery that she was afraid she was going to die. "You're not going to die," he said. He knew she was scared. He was scared, too. "Ambulances and hospitals are waiting for you." At 10:30, when the police announced that the building was safe and ambulances drove up, Bradbery took a minute to call his wife. "I'm okay," he told her. "but whatever you've heard, take the worst case, multiply it by 20 and that's what we're standing in."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/21/AR2007062102497_pf.html

6/22/200
In an ambulance, Blacksburg EMT worker Sue McGann-Osborne gave Haas a warm blanket and water. She helped her call her mother. It was 10:38 and the world had not yet heard of Norris Hall.

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Once the search-and-rescue operation was over, local police turned the scene over to the Virginia State Police. Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives also were there. In addition, 100 state troopers were on their way. Rushing down Interstate 81 alongside them came sheriff’s deputies and police and ambulance units from across southwestern Virginia.

When Col. W. Steven Flaherty, the state police superintendent, arrived from Richmond before 2 p.m., scores of officers were photographing, documenting and searching for evidence. They could hear student cellphones ringing. And ringing. Loved ones were desperately hoping for an answer.

One of the toughest tasks was identifying the victims. Their IDs, if they had them, were in backpacks and book bags scattered throughout the classrooms. Officers would later have to ask some parents about unique marks on their children’s bodies.

Bart McEntire, the head of the ATF’s Roanoke office, walked into the bloodstained hallways of Norris about 3 p.m. Since the morning, his agents had been helping to evacuate and secure more than 100 buildings on the 2,600-acre campus and respond to bomb threats and other reports of shooters. Crime scene technicians gathered ballistics evidence -- 174 spent casings and 203 live rounds. ATF Agent Terry Henderson searched through a black-and-gray backpack by the second-floor water fountain. A claw hammer, a folding knife, a straight-blade knife and a receipt from Roanoke Firearms were in the bag. McEntire sent an agent to the gun store to find out who bought the weapon.

McEntire knew his most important task was to determine whether the earlier shooting at West Ambler Johnston dormitory was connected to Norris. He dispatched Agent Tom Gallagher to the ATF laboratory in Beltsville to compare evidence from each scene.

It was too windy for the governor’s plane to take him, so Gallagher carefully sealed the guns and casings into a box and got on the road about 4 p.m., driving 90 mph with lights and sirens on much of the way. The pressure was intense. Investigators had not identified the shooter or matched the crime scenes. Firearms examiners met Gallagher when he arrived at the ATF laboratory three hours later.

Walter Dandridge, the examiner who matched the bullets in the Washington area sniper case, got to work. Peering through a microscope, he began to examine the lands and grooves in the bullets from Virginia Tech in a process called “ballistics fingerprinting,” which matches distinct marks on recovered bullets to a particular gun.

Back in Blacksburg, frantic parents, siblings and spouses at The Inn at Virginia Tech waited for word about their loved ones. The task of telling the parents about the deaths of their children fell to the two police chiefs -- Flinchum and Crannis. Flaherty would join them later. For hours, the chiefs, accompanied by chaplains, entered private rooms to meet with family members. Both had given death notifications during their careers. But on this night, they would enter those rooms over and over and over again.

As the grim notifications continued, investigators inside a makeshift command center on the first floor of Norris learned that the Roanoke Firearms receipt had been preliminarily linked to 23-year-old student Seung Hui Cho. The paperwork he filled out to buy a 9mm Glock on March 13 listed his immigration and naturalization number. Soon, they were able to get a fingerprint from immigration records. They matched that to a print from Cho taken from the morgue. FBI Supervisory Senior Resident Agent Kevin Foust sent an agent to Cho’s family in Centreville and contacted the FBI’s Seoul office.
About 2 a.m., a weary Tom Gallagher returned to Norris from Beltsville and McEntire told him to go home. About as Gallagher was driving home, he got a call. The bullets matched. Cho's 9mm gun was tied to both crime scenes.

* * *

Police officers visited Emily Haas at Lewis-Gale Medical Center in Salem, where she was treated. Cho's bullets had grazed, but not entered, her skull. Forensic nurses took pictures of her wounds and collected the bullet fragments from her hair as evidence before police asked her to tell them what she remembered.

Her 911 call had been critical to officers. By staying on the phone, she had given them details about what was happening inside Norris when they were locked outside.

The officers who entered Norris Hall the morning of April 16 underwent stress debriefing sessions to deal with what they saw. Crannis, Wilson and others visited hospitals to see the students they had rushed to safety. McEntire went to church one night after everyone else had left and sat in a pew, alone with the lights off, and prayed. In a heart-wrenching return to Norris, Flinchum took some parents of students who died to the second floor.

Until about a week ago, Bradbery could not go back to Norris. "Trying to make sense of senselessness," he said. "By God, you can't do it."

Haas returned to Virginia Tech with her mother to thank the lieutenant whose calm voice she heard over the cellphone. They hugged. The wounds on the back of Haas's head remain tender, but she feels better and is trying to move on. Debbi Morgan said seeing Haas's dimpled smile helped her begin to heal from the effects of what she'd heard unfold in Room 211.

Neither of them wanted to hear the tape of their 911 call.

Staff researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.